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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [UP](#) [LH](#)
SUBJECT: UKRAINE/LITHUANIA: ADAMKUS LOBBIES FOR
EURO-ATLANTIC INTEGRATION

REF: STATE 4305

Classified By: Political Counselor Kent Logsdon for reasons 1.4(b,d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus' three-day state visit to Ukraine -- his fourth trip here this year -- was intended to demonstrate a willingness to work with the new Yanukovych government, promote bilateral trade and investment ties, and facilitate cooperation in the energy sector. His hosting of a business forum in Donetsk highlighted, particularly to backers of Prime Minister Yanukovych, the opportunities enhanced trade with the West has to offer. The primary message, however, was the importance of NATO membership for Ukraine. In the wake of Adamkus' visit, however, our Lithuanian Embassy interlocutor expressed concern over Yanukovych's attitude towards Euro-Atlantic integration. The Lithuanian Embassy DCM said Lithuania would send former Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas -- a person well regarded by Yanukovych -- to Ukraine to impress the advantages of Euro-Atlantic integration on Yanukovych. End summary.

The Itinerary

¶2. (U) Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus arrived for a three-day state visit to Ukraine November 14 to mark the 15th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations. According to Ukrainian MFA Lithuania desk officer Khrystyna Orlovska, his delegation included the Ministers of Defense, Culture, and Economy. Adamkus met with President Yushchenko, Yanukovych, parliament (Rada) speaker Oleksandr Moroz, and briefly with opposition politician Yulia Tymoshenko. While in Kyiv he co-chaired with Yushchenko a meeting of the Ukraine-Lithuania Council of Presidents. After a November 15 breakfast meeting with local business leaders, Adamkus laid a wreath at the memorial to victims of the 1932-1933 Holodomor famine and spoke to students at a local university and then went to Lutsk for a six-hour visit. He then traveled to Donetsk to meet local leaders and attend a Lithuanian-Ukrainian business forum on November 16. Adamkus also met with local university students and opened Lithuania's honorary consulate before returning to Vilnius.

Strong Ties, Shared History

¶3. (U) The two countries enjoy strong economic ties. In 2005 total trade turnover in 2005 was \$476 million, of which Lithuanian exports to Ukraine constituted \$282 million and imports, \$194 million. Orlovska noted a 40 percent increase in trade volume in the first 9 months of 2006 compared to ¶2005. While the foreign direct investment from Ukraine to Lithuania is a minuscule \$0.4 million, direct investment from Lithuania to Ukraine is \$45 million. While the trade and investment figures in absolute numbers are not large, they are respectable, given Lithuania's population of 3.5 million.

14. (U) Ukraine and Lithuania have historically strong ties, with large parts of western Ukraine once part of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth. In his speech on November 15 at Kyiv's Taras Shevchenko University, Adamkus said the fates of the many peoples that lived between the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea have intertwined and intersected over the centuries; both Lithuania and Ukraine have lived through famine, occupation and foreign oppression. Adamkus also remarked that Ukraine's most famous poet Shevchenko spent part of his youth in Vilnius and Lithuanian poet Jonas Maironis studied in Kyiv. Love of national freedom, which was the underlying theme of both these writers, was an expression of a shared national trait made stronger by centuries of historical challenges.

15. (U) Lithuania "knocked on the door to the European home of nations" after the collapse of the Soviet Union, "thumping heavily at times," Adamkus continued, eventually entering NATO and the EU. Both Orlovska and Lithuanian Embassy Counselor Darius Vitkauskas suggested that Lithuania would be supportive of Ukraine's entry into the EU and noted that Adamkus has a particular interest in political and economic developments here. Vitkauskas said that Adamkus has been to Ukraine four times this year and at least 11 times since becoming President. While in Kyiv, Adamkus publicly stated, "Lithuania cannot imagine Europe without Ukraine."

Support for Yushchenko

16. (C) Yushchenko, Adamkus and Polish President Kaczynski, who share a common vision of a democratic Ukraine that is a

KYIV 00004537 002 OF 002

member of NATO and the EU, form a "troika," according to Lithuanian MFA Under Secretary Zygimantas Pavilionis who traveled to Ukraine with Adamkus (reftel). According to Vitkauskas, Adamkus and Yushchenko agreed NATO membership for Ukraine is a goal. Yushchenko thanked Adamkus for supporting Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic aspirations and recent GUAM initiatives, and said that Ukraine's entry into WTO would be independent of Russia's position. Adamkus asked that more references to NATO be inserted into the political life of Ukraine and stressed the importance of a NATO education program. Adamkus suggested a joint fact-finding mission to Transnistria in the context of the Council of Presidents. The Ukrainian MFA agreed to study the idea. The two presidents signed a declaration that characterized the relationship between Ukraine and Lithuania as a 'dynamic and close partnership.' There was also an agreement to expand cooperation between the civil services of the two countries.

17. (SBU) Vitkauskas said that Yushchenko reacted favorably to Adamkus' suggestion that Ukraine supply electricity to Lithuania after the Ignalina nuclear power plant closes in 2009 but noted that Belarus' cooperation would be needed. They also discussed the possibility of reversing the flow of the Odesa-Brody pipeline and supplying the Lithuanian oil refinery in Mazeikiai. Yushchenko and Adamkus agreed to establish a committee of experts to study energy cooperation.

Skepticism about Yanukovych

18. (C) The Lithuanian Embassy's Vitkauskas said Yanukovych told Adamkus that he expects the current government to be in power until 2011 and that he (Yanukovych) is in favor of Yushchenko remaining as president after 2009. Yanukovych opined that the next presidential election "could be in parliament." His position on NATO is "more positive" than society as a whole but he had to avoid "hurried, rash steps" and "we cannot run in front of a train." Adamkus said, if Ukraine wanted to join NATO, it should "speak with a clear voice."

¶9. (C) In our December 1 meeting with Vitkauskas, he expressed considerable unease about Yanukovych's intentions. He was concerned about reports in the press after the just-completed Yanukovych-Putin meeting that Yanukovych spoke about a single economic space with Russia and used a Soviet era term in Russian ("Pribaltica") to describe the Baltic region. He was also concerned about Putin's intention to increase the volume of Russian goods shipped through Ukraine to Black Sea ports, presumably at the expense of Baltic ports.

¶10. (C) Vitkauskas said the Lithuanian government will take steps to convince Yanukovych that "there cannot be two integrations," and expressed hope that a similar point will be made to Yanukovych when he travels to Washington. He mentioned that Lithuania would take "concrete" steps to impress upon Yanukovych of the advantages of Euro-Atlantic integration including bringing former Lithuanian President and Prime Minister, Algirdas Brazauskas -- a person well regarded by Yanukovych, to Ukraine.

¶11. (U) Visit Embassy Kyiv's classified website:
www.state.gov/p/eur/kiev.
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